

Syria

*****U N C L A S S I F I E D*****S COPY

ROUTINE

TO RUEHJN #1514 2101010

R 291000Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

BT SECSTATE WASHDC 1101

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 1514

D PT. PASS WHITE HOUSE

C.D. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (RICHARD NIXON)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT UNPAID BILLS

1. IN COURSE OF DAYS LEADING TO OPENING OF DAMASCUS FAIR, WE HAVE HAD ENORMOUS DIFFICULTY OBTAINING HOTEL ROOMS FOR EXHIBITORS IN U.S. PAVILION. THIS DIFFICULTY IS IN SPITE OF WRITTEN NOTIFICATION FROM SYRIAN GOVERNMENT OF AN ALLOCATION OF 15 ROOMS FOR U.S. PAVILION. DURING EXTENDED DISCUSSION WITH HOTEL MANGER OF SEMIRANIS HOTEL, SITE OF OUR ROOMS, SCOWOFF WAS TOLD THAT PRESS DELEGATION, WHICH USED ENTIRE HOTEL DURING PRESIDENTIAL VISIT, LEFT HOTEL WITHOUT LEAVING ANY GRATUITIES FOR STAFF. IN ADDITION, HE TOLD US THAT PASSWATER, U.S. OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF PRESS, FAILED TO PAY HIS HOTEL BILL.

2. IN THIS PART OF WORLD, FAILURE TO SHOW ANY APPRECIATION FOR STAFF AS IN THE CASE CAN ONLY LEAD TO PROLONGED AND EVERLASTING PROBLEMS FOR THOSE OF US WHO REMAIN BEHIND. WHILE IN THIS CASE OF RESERVATIONS FOR FAIR, THERE COULD BE MANY EXPLANATIONS FOR OUR DIFFICULTY, NOT LEAST OF WHICH WOULD BE NORMAL SYRIAN WAY OF DOING BUSINESS, FACT THAT MANGER HOSTILE TO U.S. EMBASSY OFFICERS, FACT WE RAISED THESE SUBJECTS, AND FACT WE STILL HAVING DIFFICULTY EVEN AFTER HIGH-LEVEL SARG INTERVENTION ONLY STRENGTHENS MY BELIEF THAT FAILURE OF PRESS TO LEAVE GRATUITIES IS PRIMARY REASONS FOR OUR TROUBLES.

3. WE CHECKED WITH TOYERS, WHO POSTED HERE TO ASSIST PRESS IN SEMIRANIS HOTEL, AND THEY CONFIRM THEY ASKED PASSWATER ABOUT GRATUITIES AND WERE TOLD NEVER-TO-MIND THAT THEY WOULD TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING. IT WAS

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1. AFTER PRESS LEFT HOTEL THAT OUR TOVERS LEARNED
THE LEFT BEHIND.

2. STRONGLY BELIEVE WHITE HOUSE OR OTHER PROPER AUTHORITY SHOULD COME FORTH WITH NECESSARY FUNDS TO CORRECT THIS EMBARRASSING SITUATION. WE FIND IT MORE APPALLING THAN PERHAPS IT FIRST APPEARS WHEN YOU REMEMBER SARG PICKED UP FULL TAB AT HOTEL AND PRESS IN FACT DID NOT HAVE TO PAY EITHER ROOM OR MEALS. MANY PEOPLE BOTH AMERICAN AND SYRIANS WORKED VERY HARD TO MAKE PRESIDENT'S VISIT THE SUCCESS IT WAS. ACCORDINGLY, WE SHOULD NOT NOW ALLOW PROBLEMS SUCH AS THIS TO FETER AND TO CONTINUE TO EFFECT ADVERSELY OUR ABILITY TO DO GOOD JOB ON GOING PROJECTS (FYI, AMOUNT LEFT IN OTHER HOTELS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO STAFF WAS ABOUT \$1000).

3. IN THIS REGARD, PLEASE NOTE DAMASCUS 1346 AND 1448 WHICH INITIALLY REPORTED PASSWATER'S FAILURE TO PAY HIS HOTEL BILL. WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR REPLY. PLEASE ADVISE US ON STATUS THIS MATTER.

SCOTES

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